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ABSTRACT

This unit of study introduces high school students to the idea that people of integrity often disagree and still respect each others' efforts to achieve specific goals. The lessons examine the differences between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in the Indian struggle for independence from Great Britain and also looks at their views on education. Suggested student activities include independent reading, answering questions on the reading, an outline for an extended paper, and completion of the extended paper. A bibliography of readings to be used by students also is included. (DB)

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GANDHI AND TAGORE: TWO PATHS TO INDEPENDENCE

10-12, Honors

Materials prepared March, 1990

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Name:_____

Assignment Due:_____

TAGORE AND GANDHI: TWO PATHS TO INDEPENDENCE

1. Compare and contrast the attitudes on nationalism held by Gandhi and R. Tagore. Was the difference between the two men more form than substance? Maitreyi Devi, a young friend of Tagore's when he was alive, has said both men admired Indian crafted cloth and what it represented, but Tagore would have preferred a pretty woven border on his cloth rather than the plain homespun that satisfied Gandhi. Do you agree or disagree with Maitreyi Devi? Were the differences more substantial? Explain carefully.

2. Do you think Indian communal strife and the partitioning of India may have been prevented if Tagore's philosophy had prevailed? Or do you think communal strife and partition were inevitable? Explain.

3. Do you suppose Tagore would have approved of economic sanctions against South Africa? Would Gandhi? Why or why not?

4. Both men were very interested in education and its importance for the future of India. Describe each man's efforts in promoting education. Over what did they disagree in this important effort? Which opinion do you support? Explain.

# GANDHI AND TAGORE: TWO PATHS TO INDEPENDENCE

## GOALS

This unit attempts to introduce students to the idea that great men and women often disagree on vital issues effecting humankind. In this case, the differences between Gandhi and Tagore in the Indian struggle for independence and in education are examined and evaluated, encouraging the students to form an opinion which does not have to be entirely in agreement with either of these great thinkers.

It is important for students to realize that people of integrity often disagree and still respect each other's efforts to achieve a particular goal. Scholars should seek to understand why great leaders often disagree over methods used to achieve similar ends - what influences their thinking.

## OBJECTIVES:

The students will be able to identify the differences between Gandhi and Tagore in the Indian struggle for independence and in education and explain the reasons for the differences.

## LESSON PLANS

Day One: Pass out the bibliography on readings pertinent to the assignment and the questions to guide their research for a paper covering the stated objectives.

Day Two: Check with students to be sure they understand the assignment and have access to the materials listed in the bibliography.

Day Three thru Nine: Allow time for independent study. Orally question students from time to time to see how their understanding is progressing.

Day Ten: Have students had in written answers to specific questions on the readings and an outline for the extended paper. Check and return as soon as possible so students can procede on the extended paper.

Day Twenty: Hand in completed paper.

## EVALUATION

Grade the papers.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

See attached.

GANDHI AND TAGORE: TWO PATHS TO INDEPENDENCE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gandhi, Mohandas. "Autobiography." The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought. Ed. Jaroslave Pelikan. Boston: Little, Brown and Comapny, 1990.

A well chosen exerpt from Gandhi's book length autobiography is edited by a leading scholar of religion and philosophy. Gandhi's thoughts on education and political resistance are presented here.

Gandhi. Dir. Sir Richard Attenborough. Columbia Pictures. 1983. 215 minutes.

A sympathetic presentation of Gandhi's political struggles against the British Raj and the system of apartheid in South Africa. The film provides an excellent visual setting for students to better be able to imagine how and where events took place.

Home and the World. Videocassette. Dir. Sanyajit Ray. Films Incorporated Video, 1985. 84 minutes.

Typical of Ray, the film is filled with visual detail to illustrate late 19th and early 20th centuries Bengali culture. It is an interpretation of the novel by Tagore and does not follow the book exactly. It is well worth viewing.

Kripalani, Krishna. Rabindranath Tagore, a Biography. New York: The Grove Press, 1980.

This is one of the few books available on Tagore that is published in the United States - a problem that needs to be rectified. The style is typical of Indian scholarly writing and may be awkward for American high school students to follow at first. There is much valuable information available if the effort is made.

"Leaders of Hindu Reform and Revival." Sources of Indian Tradition, second edition, vol. II. Ed. Stephen Hay. New York: Columbus University Press, 1988. 36-43.

This two volumn work does a masterful job of presenting a wide range of documents and literature for a serious student of Indian history. There are insightful comments made before each selection giving the reader a sympathetic understanding of the many varieties of Indian tradition.

"Mahatma Gandhi: Nationalist India's 'Great Soul'." Sources of Indian Traditions, second edition, vol. II. Ed. Stephen Hay. New York: Columbus University Press, 1988. 243-274.

This should be read after viewing the movie, Gandhi, and before reading "Autobiography." This is a sympathetic presentation of Gandhi's policy of Swaraj.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. The Discovery of India. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982.

This is definitely a philosopher's history of India. The first half of the book describes Indian history in broad sweeping strokes. The second half concentrates on the independence struggle as viewed by one of Gandhi's most devoted disciples and India's first prime minister. Mr. Nehru was personally acquainted with Gandhi and Tagore and saw strengths in each. He comapres, rather than contrasts the two men.

"Other Nationalist Leaders in the Decade Before Independence." Sources of Indian Tradition, second edition, vol. II. New York: Columbus University Press, 1988. 275-288

An excellent source of material for events leading up to the independence struggle. It provides excellent material on Tagore's family which helps to interpret Tagore's philosophy.

Tagore, Ravindranath. Home and the World . Delhi: Macmillan India Limited, 1985.

This is one of Tagore's most controversial works. It is absolutely necessary to read this work to understand why Tagore was opposed to Gandhi's policy of Swaraj.

Tagore, Rabindranath. "The Four Stages of Life." The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1990.

This will be difficult reading for a high school student, but the effort will be rewarded with insight into the philosophy of Tagore. It focuses on his educational philosophy, but helps to explain his political philosphy as well.